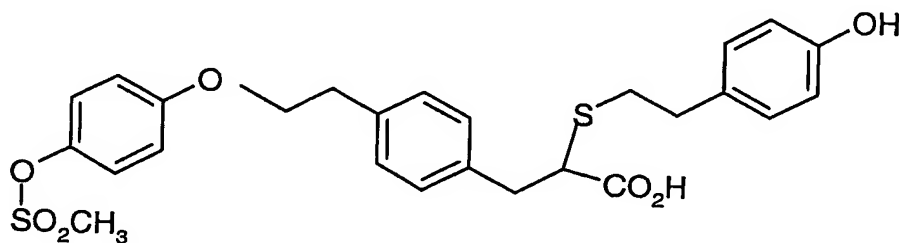
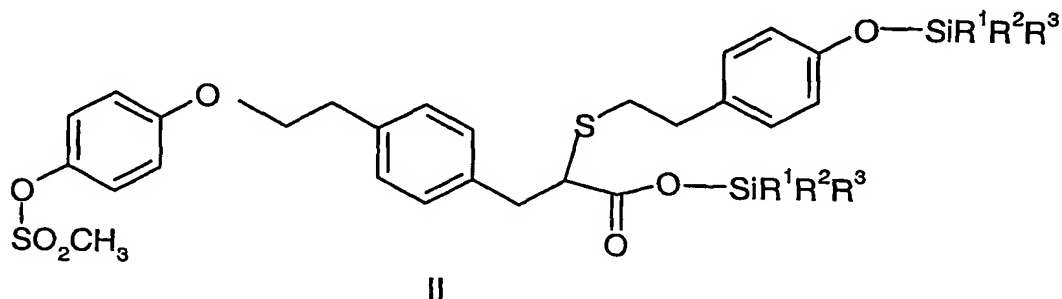


**Claims:**

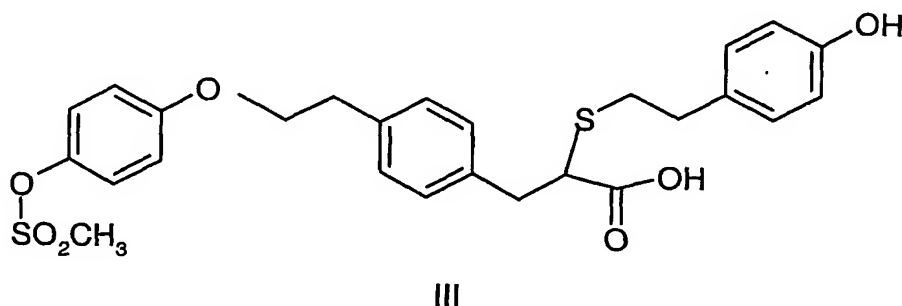
1. A process for the preparation of substantially racemic 2-{[2-(4-hydroxyphenyl)ethyl]thio}-3-[4-(2-{4-[(methylsulfonyl)oxy]phenoxy}ethyl)-phenyl]propanoic acid which comprises reacting 2-{[2-(4-hydroxyphenyl)ethyl]thio}-3-[4-(2-{4-[(methylsulfonyl)oxy]phenoxy}ethyl)phenyl]propanoic acid enriched in one enantiomer with a base in an inert solvent.
2. A process according to claim 1 wherein the acid is converted into an ester prior to racemisation or during the racemisation.
3. A process according to claim 2 wherein the racemised ester is then hydrolysed to give the racemic acid.
4. A process according to claim 1 comprising reacting 2-{[2-(4-hydroxyphenyl)ethyl]thio}-3-[4-(2-{4-[(methylsulfonyl)oxy]phenoxy}ethyl)phenyl]propanoic acid enriched in one enantiomer with a halosilane in the presence of a nitrogenous base in the presence of an inert solvent at a temperature in the range of 0 to 150°C.
5. A process for the preparation of substantially racemic 2-{[2-(4-hydroxyphenyl)ethyl]thio}-3-[4-(2-{4-[(methylsulfonyl)oxy]phenoxy}ethyl)-phenyl]propanoic acid which comprises reacting 2-{[2-(4-hydroxyphenyl)ethyl]thio}-3-[4-(2-{4-[(methylsulfonyl)oxy]phenoxy}ethyl)phenyl]propanoic acid enriched in one enantiomer with chlorotrimethylsilane in the presence of 1,8 diazabicyclo[5.4.0] undec-7-ene in the presence of an inert solvent at a temperature in the range of 0 to 150°C.
6. A process according to claim 4 comprising reacting a compound of formula I



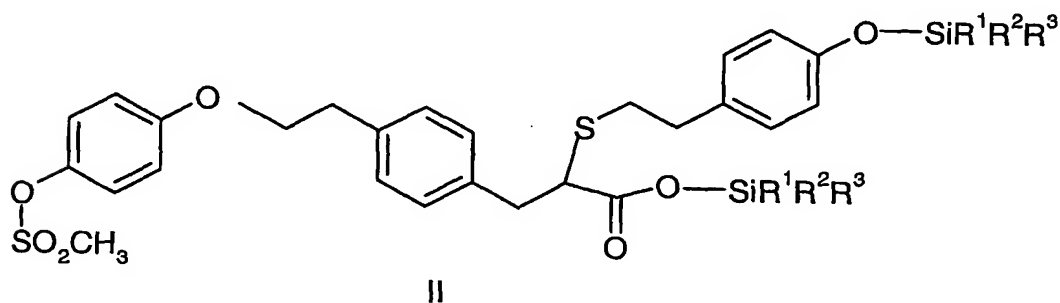
enriched in one enantiomer with a chlorosilane of formula  $\text{ClSiR}^1\text{R}^2\text{R}^3$  in which  $\text{R}^1$ ,  $\text{R}^2$ , and  $\text{R}^3$  independently represent a  $\text{C}_{1-6}$  alkyl group or aryl in the presence of a nitrogenous base in the presence of an inert solvent at a temperature in the range of 0 to  $150^\circ\text{C}$  to give a compound of formula II



in which  $\text{R}^1$ ,  $\text{R}^2$ , and  $\text{R}^3$  are previously defined which is hydrolysed to give a racemic compound of formula III



7. A compound of formula II



wherein  $\text{R}^1$ ,  $\text{R}^2$ , and  $\text{R}^3$  independently represent a  $\text{C}_{1-6}$  alkyl group or aryl.

8. A compound of formula IV

